



Craig Whittaker MP

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Response to Police Widows' Pensions – March 2017

Thank you for contacting me about police widows' pensions.

We have the finest police officers in the world who do a fantastic job serving local communities, tackling crime, keeping people safe and I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the important and often dangerous work that they do.

I am sure you will be glad to hear that in recognition of the level of risk that police officers face in the execution of their duty, the Government has pledged to reform the 1987 police pension scheme to ensure that the widows, widowers and civil partners of police officers and firefighters who have died on duty will no longer lose their partner's pension if they remarry, cohabit, or form a civil partnership. No longer will they have to choose between solitude and financial security. The changes have been backdated to take effect from 1 April 2015.

I appreciate your further concerns regarding this issue, but I am afraid that pensions will not be re-instated for those who have already lost them through remarriage or cohabitation, although current rules already allow re-instatement if the 'new' relationship ends.

As policing is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and Scotland, the Northern Ireland Executive and Scottish Government respectively are responsible for the design and funding of police pensions in those parts of the United Kingdom. The Government has a continuous duty to ensure that public service pensions are affordable, sustainable and fair, both for the members of those schemes and for other taxpayers. Similarly it is important to note that the Home Office consulted with the Police Advisory Board of England and Wales when making these changes. This policy is also in keeping with that applied as part of the Armed Forces' changes announced in 2014.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP